

In The Night We Trust

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Jason ran past the mist shrouded gravestones, trying futilely to drown out the screams of his fellow Caitiff dying in the catacombs behind him. By all rights, he should be facing final death along with the rest of them, incinerated by the plastic explosives the Legacy Kine had set before their rescue attempt. Had it not been for his military service prior to his Embrace, he would have burned with the other members of his clanless community. When he saw that almost invisible little packet tucked away in the stones and the timer beside it, he had known that this haven was finished. Now he ran from the smell of smoke and burning undead flesh and the wailing of the dead. "Damn Philippe! Why didn't he or Justine just embrace the woman when they had the chance in New Orleans?"

"If you don't slow down, you'll knock over one of those stones and then I'll be very annoyed." A voice floated out of the fog, sounding coldly amused. Jason stopped suddenly, almost falling in shock. A quick glance around him confirmed that he was alone, yet the voice had sounded close. Much too close.

"I was just taking a short cut back to my car." He called out, hoping his voice didn't betray him. He forced himself to assume a more relaxed posture, scanning the mist for his next possible victim. The blood lust rose in him, helping him to fixate on the place where the voice had emanated. A rude snort was his only answer. "Look, I don't like games, especially not tonight. Show yourself, let me at least see who I'm talking to." There was no answer to his demand at first, then a shadow materialized beside one of the taller headstones, moving into the dull light of the approaching dawn. It was a young woman dressed in a long, rust colored gown and carrying a dark shawl. Her long hair flowed down her back in ebony waves, reaching almost to

her waist. Her dark eyes were hypnotic, drawing any man foolish enough to look into them into their depths. Jason felt himself go cold at the sight of her, his hunger dying in his throat. There could be no mistaking the aura of power rolling off of her, like waves of heat from a fire. She was one of "Them", one of the Kindred population, a member of the one of the eternal clans. A vampire like himself, yet nothing like him. He had heard that the local "Prince" had many retainers to enforce his laws, had even heard one described as "Death with an Angel's face" yet he and his associates had been fortunate in never having attracted the attention of those whose loyalties were to the their clans and to the Camarilla. But tonight his luck had run out.

"Well, here we are then. You wanted to see who you were talking to. Now then, what would you like to talk about? The destruction of your haven, perhaps? Or would you prefer to talk about the killings your merry little band of clanless rejects have committed within the limits of this city, murders whose consequences our Prince must deal with." The woman dropped her shawl on the cold ground and moved silently toward the terrified vampire. Her eyes had changed from liquid brown to bloody red in the space of a heartbeat, yet her voice was still the same, cold and amused at the same time. In the blink of an eye she had pounced on him, pushing him to the ground with one unnaturally strong shove. Her eyes bored into his, robbing him of his will to struggle, effectively pinning him to the leaf strewn dirt. "Yes, I think we must talk about these thoughtless hunts you and your kind have engaged in. My Prince was not terribly pleased to discover your kind had invaded his domain. But he was willing to allow you to stay so long as you abided by the laws of the Masquerade. And how did you repay his great kindness? By attracting the attention of human hunters, possibly putting our existence in danger. He is most certainly not pleased with you wretches, and when he is not pleased, I am not pleased." She calmly took the cowering vampire by the throat and slowly squeezed, her nails slicing into his flesh.

A cold wind stirred the dry leaves, sending them scampering back towards the iron-worked fences and marble tombs of the abandoned cemetery. Another figure appeared out of the mists behind the pair, rising out of the entrance to an ill-tended mausoleum. It was a younger man, dressed in jeans and a leather jacket, with a scruffy beard and wind blown hair. Behind him other equally young and unkempt types milled restlessly in the shadows, keeping well away from the dark-haired woman and her prisoner. "Isolde, Julian wants him alive." Cash called out, hoping his Prince's kinswoman would not kill this foolish newcomer, at least not yet. "The others are all dead, incinerated in their haven."

Isolde straightened, still clutching the squirming vampire by the throat. "What about Philipe?"

"Dead, near as I can tell. It's too hot to go in and check." The Gangrel Primogen stepped gingerly into the dull light, pulling his jacket around his face.

Isolde sighed in frustration. "Very well, Cash. Take this worthless creature back to Julian and have him put in the Prison of Lights until the Primogen Council can be called. And have your Gangrel clan out looking for any other survivors. These Caitiff are an abomination at the best of times. We had best be sure they will cause us no further trouble." She watched the young leader of the Gangrel clan

tie their prisoner's hands and drag him into the shadows. The Gangrel in San Francisco were gypsies and street children, always on the move. No one would notice them as they searched the dark streets for these outcasts of the Kindred world. She frowned at the thought of presenting the news of the Legacy hunters success to the Primogen Council. The rulers of the vampire clans were a contentious lot on a good day and lately the leader of the Brujah clan, Cameron, had taken it into his head to be especially disagreeable. The Brujah had decided to take exception to everything and anything that was decided by the Council, making consensus almost impossible. "The last thing Julian needs is to fight a war on two fronts. We can not do much with Cameron, but the Legacy..." She cast one last look at the smoke billowing from the burning haven, then disappeared back into the fog, letting the sun take possession of the day.

Pt. 2

Alex Moreau gazed thoughtfully out over the fog shrouded garden from her bedroom window. The events of the last few days were weighing heavily on her mind, more so than she liked to admit. It was not often that a person is almost made into a vampire and lives to remember the occasion. So much of what had happened between herself and Philipe seemed like a dream. Images presented themselves to her, like scenes from a half-watched play, leaving her wondering what other things still lurked in her memory, waiting to surprise her. The other members of her Legacy House had been supportive, but Alex could tell that things were still not quite as they had been between herself and her chosen family. Nick especially seemed to be trying too hard to gloss over what had occurred, finding an unending string of excuses not to talk about the events of that night. Alex wondered briefly if she would ever be able to explain to herself or the others what had driven her to chose him of all the people in the house as her first victim.

"If I didn't know better, I'd swear he's embarrassed to be in the same room with me." Alex thought to herself, playing with the crucifix she now wore around her neck. It had been a gift from Rachel and Kat Corrigan, a small talisman to help her sleep in the days after she had been rescued from the vampire lair that Philipe used to hide her while he waited for her transformation to be completed. Now it served the same purpose as her Grandma Rose's worry beads, a small object for her fingers to play with while her mind was busy with other things.

"Penny for your thoughts?" Rachel Corrigan asked, slipping quietly into the bedroom. She examined her friend with a practiced eye. As a practicing psychiatrist, Rachel was accustomed to dealing with patients who had undergone traumatic experiences and were having problems dealing with their aftermath. It wasn't often, however, that she found her services needed by the other members of the Legacy.

"They're not worth that much." Alex replied, starting to turn away from the window. She stopped suddenly, seeing a flash of something in the fog shrouded trees. "Rachel, did you see that?"

"See what?" Rachel asked, moving to look out of the windows herself.

"I thought I saw something moving, there in the trees. It was just a

flash, something out of the corner of my eyes...It's not there anymore."

"Maybe it was a deer." Rachel suggested reasonably, still scanning the grounds.

"Maybe it was." Alex agreed, her voice uncertain.

"Look, you've been cooped up in this house for days. Why don't you and I take a run into town, maybe have dinner and catch a movie. It'll do you good to get out and have some fun."

Alex smiled, her liquid brown eyes starting to sparkle at the thought. "A friend of mine, Caitlin Burns, told me about this club I've been dying to see. Why don't we start there?"

"Great!" Rachel agreed, glad to see some animation come back to Alex's face. "What's it called?"

"The Haven."

"Sounds fascinating" the older woman responded. She turned and started out of the door, then turned back hesitantly. "Oh, by the way, Derek wants to talk to you in his study. I told him I would check and see if you were up to it."

"In other words, he wants to pick my brain for anything I remember about the vampires." Alex replied quietly, her mood turning somber.

"I can tell him not to push it." Rachel offered, concerned at her friend's quiet demeanor.

"No, I'll have to talk about it sometime. This is as good a time as any." She moved to join the doctor by the door, casting a furtive glance at the mirror in passing. Her solid reflection stared back at her, reinforcing the fact that her ordeal was truly over.

Downstairs, Derek Rayne, the Precept of the San Francisco House, looked over the data that he and Nick had acquired in their search for answers about Alex's demon lover. Philip had fooled everyone, both in New Orleans and here in San Francisco. All the newspaper clippings had spoken of him in glowing terms, describing him as a successful business man and patron of the arts. Derek frowned as he read one line, a brief statement describing a ball the vampire had attended in the Bay Area. One of the local dignitaries also in attendance was a man by the name of Julian Luna. "Now where have I heard that name before?" he thought to himself.

"Problem, boss?" a voice asked from the doorway. Nick Boyle, the house's resident security expert and Derek's right-hand strolled in, still sweating from his run around the grounds.

"What do you know about a man named Julian Luna?" Derek asked, looking up at the younger man with a frown.

"Local Mafia type, if the rumors I've heard are to be believed. Has a hand in everything but no one can prove anything illegal. Why?"

"I could swear I've heard the name in relation to the Legacy, but ..."

"Well, we do supposedly work for the Luna foundation." Nick joked, settling into the leather chair in front of Derek's desk. "Maybe that's what's bothering you."

"No, I think it was something my father was looking into before he died." Derek reached into his desk and pulled out his father's journal, the tome that Winston Rayne had used to write down his thoughts and feelings in the last year of his life. Derek had taken to keeping it in his desk after the revelation of his father's surrender to the forces of darkness. Though he had read through this particular journal from cover to cover a dozen times, he still could not find that one defining moment when his father had turned away from his duty to the Legacy and given his soul to the darkness. Now he scanned the pages quickly, looking for one particular paragraph. "Yes, here it is. My father had received information linking someone named Luna to a case of arson in a place called Manzanita."

"Why would a criminal case be of any interest to the Legacy?" Nick asked.

"My father thought it was one event in a war between rival factions of vampires he had come to suspect lived in the city." Derek looked up quickly as the door to his office opened. As Alex and Rachel entered, he closed the journal and slid it back into his desk.

"Rachel said you wanted to speak to me." Alex began somberly, trying not to look at Nick.

"Yes, I was hoping you would feel like talking about what happened in the catacombs. We discovered with this event that much of what we thought we knew about hunting vampires was myth. Maybe you can tell us what is truth and what is legend."

"Derek, I think it's too soon to grill Alex on what was done to her." Rachel began, coming in to stand beside her friend.

"No, I want to answer Derek's questions." Alex replied softly. "But I don't remember much that might be useful. I guess Philip would have instructed me in what to avoid after I had made my first kill." She glanced briefly at Nick, who stared somberly back at her. "No one in the catacombs seemed to be inclined to tell me much of anything. It's funny, though. I got the impression they were nervous about someone from the outside coming into the caves. It was almost like they felt they were being hunted."

"They were." Nick retorted. "By us."

"No." Alex insisted, her mind flashing back to the snippets of conversation she had overheard while in the caves. "They weren't terribly concerned about you or any other humans finding them. It was something else, something with real power over them. I'm just not sure what."

"That's enough." Rachel broke in to the conversation, noting the tension that was beginning to form in Alex's eyes. "I think what Alex needs for right now is a break from Legacy business. As her doctor, I

prescribe a night out, with dinner at a nice club, music and maybe even dancing. And I won't put up with any arguments from either of you two."

"Rachel and I were going to try out a club called the Haven. Maybe you and Nick would like to join us?" Alex offered.

"Yes, I think it would do us all good to get out for a few hours." Derek agreed, masking a feeling of dread with a pleasant smile. "Why don't you two go and get ready? Nick and I will meet you out front in an hour." The two women turned quickly and left, not wanting to give their Precept a chance to change his mind.

"Want to tell me what that was about?" Nick asked, his eyes locked on the older man's face. "One minute your hot to question Alex about vampire society and now you're wanting to go out and paint the town."

"The Haven is mentioned in my father's journal." Derek replied somberly. "He tells of visiting the club one night while investigating the vampire problem he had begun to suspect was forming in the city."

"So what did he find out?" Nick asked curiously.

"He didn't find out anything. His next entry tells of waking up in his bedroom the next morning and remembering nothing of the night before. Before he had a chance to go back, he received the message about the sepulcher of the fallen angel being found. As far as I know, no one ever went back to verify his suspicions." Derek's stared at the door, remembering his father's actions the night he had been killed by the evil imprisoned in that sepulcher. Winston Rayne had been drinking that night. Most likely he had been drinking the night he had investigated the Haven. It made sense that no member of the Legacy had followed up on his suspicions.

Nick cleared his throat noisily, hoping to break past his mentor's obviously painful thoughts. "So we're just going to waltz in to this club and say - Okay, everyone who's a blood sucking fiend raise your hand?"

Derek smiled ruefully. "Well, maybe not. At any rate, Rachel is right about Alex. She does need to get away from the horrors we investigate and just enjoy being alive. So do we, for that matter."

"And if it gets us into that club and we can poke around, maybe find out if your dad was right then that's good too, right?" Nick grinned at his friend and jumped up, heading for his room and a quick shower. At the door he turned and looked at Derek, a quizzical look in his eyes. "So what do we do if we find something?"

"Whatever we must." Derek replied grimly.

Pt. 3

The music in the Haven tonight was a combination of Enya and Loreena McKennett. The sound of violins and ballads being sung gave the club an ambiance that few fine establishments in the city could match. Julian Luna, of clan Ventrue and Prince of the City, sat in his special booth, watching the various humans and Kindred mix about the

room, the Kine oblivious to the hunters in their midst. The club had not been his first choice, especially since Lilly now lived in the offices above the bar. But his former paramour had made herself scarce as soon as he entered, for which Julian was thankful. He had come to her club ostensibly to meet with representatives of various charitable organizations who were courting his support for their various projects. In fact, it had been a good excuse to get away from the mansion and all the problems being Prince of a divided city. And, if he allowed himself to be honest, he had hoped to see Caitlin Burns, his former lover, even if it was only from across the room.

"So, this is where you ran off to." a voice intruded on his lonely thoughts. Isolde Durant, Julian's Archon, his enforcer of the law and sister to his late sire, slid into the booth beside her younger kinsman. She smoothed her long skirts down around her legs then leaned in to the glow of the candlelight, watching the man's face in front of her. "I did wonder since you did not see fit to leave me a message where you could be reached."

"Did it ever occur to you I might not want to be found?" Julian asked wearily.

"Yes, it did. But now is not the time to succumb to the lassitude of depression, my Prince. The Caitiff problem seems to have resolved itself. And let me say that the next time you need someone to play policeman for another clan, do give thought to honoring the Brujah with that task."

Julian glanced back at her in surprise. "I thought you and Cash were going to track them down and warn them off."

"Well, that was the plan. However, it seems that the Kine hunters known as the Legacy arrived before we did and burned the clanless one's in their haven. From what we have learned, the one from New Orleans had designs on one of their fellow hunters. This, needless to say, did not set well with the local Legacy House. We do not know how many Caitiff went to final death or for that matter how many might have escaped before we arrive. But ..." Isolde's voice trailed off as her dark eyes caught site of a group entering the club. "Oh dear, we seem to have a problem."

Julian looked in the direction of the club's entrance, searching for what might have disturbed his Archon. He noticed a party just being seated, two men and two women. One of the men, dark hair flecked with gray, looked familiar. "Where do I know them from?" he asked, more to himself than to the woman at his side.

"They are from the Luna foundation, that non-profit group which acts as umbrella for hunters known as the Legacy." Isolde replied, her cold eyes never leaving the group in front of her.

Julian's eyes narrowed as he remembered the last time the Legacy had attempted to meddle in the affairs of the Kindred of San Francisco. It had been shortly after the debacle at Manzanita, when his sire, the Prince, had sent him to massacre a particular group of Brujah for supposedly killing members of his clan. He had come to the club to be alone after the slaughter, to be away from his sire and the other members of the Council who had congratulated him on his success. It was almost closing time before he noticed the Kine at the next table,

slipping into the shadows and up towards Lillie's offices. It had been a simple matter to corner him in the inner office. He had not expected, however, for the Kine to put up a fight. In the end, he had resorted to dominating the man's mind to keep from hurting him. It was then that he had learned of the organization known as the Legacy.

"What are they doing here?" Julian asked, his voice cold.

"Mind reading is not one of our clan's talents." Isolde replied dryly. She settled in to the shadows of the booth to watch the hunters in comfort.

Pt. 4

It hadn't taken long for the Legacy group to find The Haven. It seemed that everyone had heard of the club. From the amount of traffic in and out of the building, it appeared to be one of the more popular up-scale clubs in the city. It was beautifully decorated and the music was at once soothing and stirring. Yet something about the place disturbed Derek Raine. Something about the way certain individuals watched as people walked by them, the way some individuals seemed to move with an almost liquid fluidity on the dance floor. His instincts told him there was more to this club than it's surface beauty. Something he and his group would have to beware of.

"Derek, see the guy in the corner?" Nick commented as he pulled out a seat at their table for Rachel. "Back there with the brunette? That's Julian Luna. I pulled out some newspaper clippings on him before we left."

"Who's Julian Luna? Rachel asked quizzically, looking in the direction of the table Nick had pointed out.

"The Prince." Alex murmured, suddenly cold. Somewhere in the back of her mind she could here the voices of the dammed, speaking a name in whispered tones. Voices she remembered as having sounded afraid even to her dulled mind.

"What did you say?" Derek asked suddenly, looking sharply at the woman next to him.

"What? I ... nothing, it's nothing." Alex responded, confused. She glanced across to the table Nick had indicated, noting the two people seated there were staring back. The dark-haired women looked directly at her with cold eyes, eyes that seemed to be trying to communicate with her. Alex looked away hurriedly, afraid to be noticed yet not sure why.

Derek also looked across the club at the man staring back at them. Luna was a young and darkly handsome man with a commanding presence. He appeared to be much too young to have been the same person his father had written about, yet after their little encounter with Philippe and his group, Derek wasn't willing to take anything about the man at face value. "My father's journal mentioned a Julian Luna. I 'm not sure if this is the same man. The journal didn't give a description, just that he thought he was involved in a case of arson. Nick, who is the woman he's sitting with?"

"Not sure." Nick replied, shifting uncomfortably in his seat. His hunter's instincts told him someone was watching him from behind, watching his every move. Another predator was sizing him up for the kill. It took all of his self-control not to whirl around and see who it was.

Rachel could feel the tension rising at the table, though she could not see the reason. "I thought we were here for some relaxation? Can't Legacy business wait?" she asked in an annoyed tone.

"Yes, of course." Derek replied absently, his eyes still locked on the far table. Suddenly, the room seemed to shift around him as his "Sight" took control. He could see the woman seated with Luna, talking to something that was at once human and not human. Something that turned and looked at him with blood-red eyes. The woman turned to look at him with the same red eyes, the same hunger in her gaze. With a shudder he woke himself from the vision.

"Let's get out of here." Nick said, his voice tight. The feeling of being hunted was getting stronger, harder to ignore.

"We just got here." Rachel protested.

"No, Nick's right. Let's just leave." Alex replied, her voice betraying her nervousness. She jumped to her feet, not seeing the waitress who had been about to pass the table. The Bloody Mary the woman had been carrying was sent sailing, most of it landing on Alex's dress.

"Oh God, I'm so sorry!" the waitress exclaimed, staring at the red stain.

"It's alright, no harm done." Rachel replied, grabbing a napkin off the table and dabbing at her friends clothes. "Alex, let's get you into the bathroom and see if we can't clean this up a little. We'll be right back." She took the other woman by the arm and led her firmly away as the waitress began to clean up the mess.

Nick looked back at the table they had been watching then grabbed Derek's arm. "She's gone!"

"What?" Derek asked, turning back to see that the object of their attention was now preparing to leave. His companion was nowhere to be seen.

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"That one knows us." Isolde commented, watching the Legacy hunters as they in turn watched her Prince. She flicked one finger imperceptibly at the dark skinned beauty seated next to the older man.

"Is she the one that was almost made?" Julian asked, his eyes never leaving the group.

"Probably. They seemed to have rather an interest in us. I do wonder what she remembers. Perhaps I should see." Isolde watched as the group became tenser, sensing they were prey among a group of predators. She could feel the eyes of the other Kindred sizing up the Kine, perhaps sensing the woman's connection to their kind. Cash, Julian's bodyguard was standing at the bar, eyeing the group with

interest, especially the women. Isolde's interests lay in the men. The younger man was a soldier, of that she was sure. She'd seen that look in the eyes of her own Sire, the look of a man for whom the battlefield had once been home. The older man, from what she had heard, had the "Sight" something that could spell danger for her and her clan. It made him more dangerous than the others, and at the same time more fascinating. The two women she dismissed as not terribly interesting, though she had heard that the one might also have the Sight. "She'll be easily dealt with." Isolde thought to herself. "The door to her mind has already been opened. All I will have to do is step in." She shifted in her seat, preparing to leave.

"Not here." Julian warned, his hand dropping over her wrist. "I'll have no action taken here."

Isolde tensed at his touch. The Prince was not over-fond of his Archon, though he knew of her relationship with his councilor, the Nosferatu Primogen. For the most part, he tended to keep her at a distance, bowing to her recommendations when he must and keeping his private life out of her sphere of influence as much as he could. He had never raised his voice to her, much less touched her before. "I hadn't planned on draining her in public." She replied, gently tugging her arm free of his restraint. "I do respect the commands of the Masquerade."

"I know." Julian commented, keeping his eyes fixed firmly on the group. He watched as the dark-haired woman started to stand up just as one of the staff walked by. The resulting collision drew their attention away from his table. "Now, go." He turned his eyes to see that his companion had already left. He sighed, then stood and picked up his jacket. Isolde would deal with the situation now. It was out of his hands.

Pt. 5

Rachel led her friend into the club's ladies room and firmly closed the door behind them. It was surprisingly deserted, considering the crowd in the club itself. "Let's see if we can clean this up before it stains."

"Rachel, I think we had better leave. I can do something about the stain when we get home." Alex replied nervously. She jumped slightly as the door opened and the dark haired woman who had been seated across the room from them entered.

"Dear me, looks like you had something of an accident." Isolde commented, closing and locking the door behind her. "Let's see if we can't fix that."

Rachel placed her self between Alex and the stranger, determined to protect her friend. "I'm going to ask only once. Unlock that door or..."

"Hush not." Isolde replied, using her power to dominate the other woman's mind. "Go and sit down until I'm ready to deal with you." She caught the woman's gaze and held it, her own dark eyes growing almost black with the force of her will. The Kine had been touched by darkness and some barriers to mind control. But those barriers were nothing compared to some the Ventrue Archon had seen before. They did not keep her out for long.

Alex watched in horror as her the animation drained from her friends face. Rachel calmly walked over to a chair in the corner and sat down, her eyes glassy. "What did you do to her?" She looked back at the stranger and was caught in her hypnotic gaze. Alex could feel herself surrendering to the other woman's will, not caring what might come of that surrender. She struggled to hold on to some part of herself, steeling herself to fight against the force in front of her.

"Nothing really. I just sent her conscious mind to sleep. She'll remember nothing when I leave. Now you, on the other hand, could be a problem." Isolde walked calmly up to the terrified woman and tilted her head back with one finger, examining her neck critically. "Well, as see you've healed up nicely. I pleased. Caitiff are usually such sloppy feeders. I'm told it's because no one has taken the time to teach them properly. But then, that is the price of being clanless." She tapped Alex on the chin playfully then smoothed back her hair with an almost motherly hand.

"I won't become one of you." Alex rasped, feeling her will slowly slipping away. "I won't kill."

"Probably not." Isolde agreed, gently pushing the woman back till she was stopped by the wall. "But that's not my problem. Do you have any idea precisely what happened to you? Did Phillip tell you what to expect?"

"You knew him?" Alex asked, surprised.

"He was Caitiff, like his master. Not worth knowing as far as I was concerned. We would have been just as happy to have seen him and his little band of renegades staked out for the sun, but then you and your friends did the work for us. It is because you performed this service that my Prince is reluctant to deal with you. I, on the other hand, am not so sentimental." She smiled a cold smile. Isolde could feel the last vestiges of control slipping from the woman's mind. She would tell her all that she needed to know and more, as all those who had gone before her had done. Isolde caressed the woman's cheek and began her interrogation.

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Rachel looked down at the wet rag in her hands in confusion. Her friends dress was still wet, but the stain showed signs of lessening. She looked down and saw that some of the tomato juice stain had transferred itself to the rag in her hand. Rachel shook her head to clear the cobwebs. "Well, looks like this wasn't a good idea. I think you're going to have to send the dress to the cleaners."

Alex looked down at the stain, her mind foggy. "I guess so." She yawned suddenly, leaning tiredly against the sink. "Boy, I must be more tired than I thought. I can't seem to keep my eyes open. Maybe we'd better just get Nick and Derek and go home."

"Well, if you're sure." Rachel replied, concern in her voice. "Are you sure you're all right?"

"I'm fine Rachel." Alex replied with a sigh. "Just tired. Let's get the guys and go on before they find something that needs

investigating and keep us up all night."

Rachel grinned. "We could always just take the car and go get ice cream."

Alex smiled, suddenly not so tired. "Now there's a plan I could get into." The two women exited the bathroom arm and arm, walking past the shadows that shifted as they left.

Pt. 6

"She's gone." Nick stated, looking around the club. "That one that was with Luna. She's disappeared."

"And Luna's leaving as well." Derek replied, watching the stranger move with confidence across the club. He stopped to talk to various people between himself and the door, some of who Derek recognized from charity benefits he had attended. The man, or his money, seemed to be very much in demand.

"Should we go after him?" Nick asked, looking back in the direction that Rachel and Alex had taken.

"No. I don't want to leave Alex alone in this club." Derek replied tensely. "There is something about this place, something that makes me nervous."

"Me too." Nick agreed, scanning the room for the eyes he had felt watching him before. "If they're not out of the bathroom in 5 minutes I'm going in after them."

Derek watched Luna saunter towards the exit only half hearing his companions words. The passage in his father's journal had specifically mentioned coming to this place in search of a Julian Luna. It had also mentioned vampires. Yet this man seemed so human. "Philippe seemed human to me too." He thought to himself. "He proved me wrong."

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Julian could feel the man's eyes on him as he worked his way around the club. He wondered, briefly, if the man was any relation to the other Legacy hunter he had met. That man had been a struggle to overcome, a forceful personality that he had briefly considered binding to him by bringing him across. In the end he had chosen to take the memory of their meeting from the Kine's mind and sending him home to his bed. "I wonder what kind of a Ventrue he would have made?" he thought to himself as he greeted yet another society couple looking for his assistance.

It took almost ten minutes to get across the room, with the Legacy members watching his every move. Cash was waiting for him by the limousine. "Isolde says to tell you she'll meet you at the house." His bodyguard reported, looking back at the shadows by the cars.

"Any problems?" Julian asked, not sure he wanted to hear the answer.

"Not that she said." Cash replied, opening the door for his Prince.

Julian's car soon disappeared into the foggy San Francisco streets, leaving the bright lights of the club behind.

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"There's Rachel and Alex." Nick breathed a sigh of relief. If they had taken any longer he would have had to go looking for them.

"Are you two alright?" Derek asked, concerned.

"Yes, just a little more tired than I thought." Alex replied, her eyelids heavy with fatigue. "And I don't think this dress is going to clean up with a trip to the drycleaners. Sorry guys, can we take a raincheck on this little outing?"

"Certainly." Derek said, his voice concerned. He glanced quizzically at Rachel.

"Maybe we pushed it to soon. Alex did lose quite a bit of blood and her body does need to recover. A night on the town is still a good idea, but maybe not just yet." Rachel smiled reassuringly at the two men then led the way towards the door with Alex.

Nick and Derek followed, talking quietly as they waited for the valet to bring their car. "Think we should come back in the daylight?" Nick asked, keeping his voice pitched low. He glanced at Alex's back warily, wondering if she could hear him.

"Another time." Derek replied, also watching his friend as she leaned on Rachel, laughing at some small joke the other woman had told. "We have no proof that Julian Luna or this place had any link to the vampires that attacked Alex. Only that passage in my father's journal and even he wrote that he didn't remember much of his visit."

"Maybe they messed with his mind." Nick commented, watching the people walking in and out of the club.

"Maybe. Or maybe he was drunk again." Derek replied tersely. "Either way, we'll keep an eye on this place for now. If they are involved with the vampires, sooner or later they'll show their hand. Then we'll deal with them." The car arrived and the members of the Legacy were soon on their way home, each lost in their own thoughts.

"Another day." Derek thought as he watched the lights of the club fade in the distance. "I will be back to see what it was my father found here." The fog soon blotted out the club's brightness, leaving only the lights which lead to home.

-- pt. 7 - Epilogue.

Julian, Isolde, Cash and Dadelous sat at the round meeting table in Julian's home, discussing the night's events. The room was lit only by three great candles on the table, the Prince being unwilling to illuminate the room for so short a meeting. "Well, will they be a threat?" Julian asked his Archon, looking at his kinswoman with concern.

"I don't believe so." Isolde replied, facing her Prince calmly. "It looks as though Philippe nearly made a ghoul of the woman and would probably have brought her across if left to his own devices. I think

she still suffers somewhat from the craving his blood left with her, but I don't believe she had time to develop an eternal addiction. She is still susceptible to the call of the Kindred, and I suspect that Philippe's master, a creature called Marcus, may in time try to take advantage of that."

"I thought all the Caitiff were killed when the tunnel was destroyed." Dadelous commented, looking at the young Gangrel Primogen.

"So did we, but one of my clan says he saw Marcus leaving through the same exit as that one we have in the Prison of Light. He may be a problem further on down the line." Cash ran his fingers nervously through his hair, anxious to be back on the street looking for the missing Caitiff. "Speaking of which, what do you want me to do with him?"

"Unless you have some proof that this particular Kindred has violated the Masquerade, then I want him released." Julian replied sternly, ignoring the disapproving look from his kinswoman. "Cash, take some of your clan members and escort the man out of town. Let him know his kind are no longer welcomed in my city."

"What must be done about the Legacy group?" Dadelous inquired solemnly.

"I think we can salvage this situation best by not interfering any further." Isolde commented, tapping the table in front of her for emphasis. "If Marcus is still alive, he most will most likely take what few members of his band still exist and go to ground to lick his wounds. If he strikes anywhere, it will be at the Legacy. One of two things will then occur. Either he will destroy their House, thereby eliminating a potential problem for us or they will destroy him, riding us of the problem of these clanless ones roaming the city."

"What if the Legacy kills this Marcus character and then still comes looking for us?" Julian asked.

"We'll know if they do. Before I released the woman called Alex, I planted the thought in her mind that she should call a number if the House starts looking too closely at your affairs." Isolde replied matter of factly. "It is one of the secret numbers I have arranged to have monitored by the Nosferatu clan and can not be traced to you. We will be waiting if they ever try to find us as they did the others."

"What if they don't tell her?" Cash questioned. "I know I wouldn't if I thought one of my people had been compromised."

"It is both the weakness and the strength of these types of hunters that they believe that the strength of their ties to their house, the love they feel for the members of their fellow hunters, will always prevail over any other power. Sadly, this is not always the case." Dadelous reached across the table and silently blew out the candle before him. "I fear that this Kin's mind, once touched by one type of darkness, may be that much more open to others."

Isolde rose and blew out her candle as well. "Time will tell which is right. But for now, my Prince, your clans are safe. Let there be an

end to this hunt and let us move on to other things."

"So be it, my Archon." Julian replied, blowing out the final candle and cloaking the room in the darkness which was their life.

End
file.